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AUTHOR:

TABER, SYDNEY
RICHMOND

TITLE:

THOUGHTS ON
VIVISECTION

PLACE:

CHICAGO

DATE:

1907

Master Negative #

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Taber, Sydney Richmond, 1862-

Thoughts on vivisection, by Sydney Richmond
Taber; a reply to Prof. James Rowland Angell's
paper entitled "The reflections of a layman" in
"The world today" for April 1907. Chicago,
Vivisection reform society, 1907.

-11, p. 23 cm.

Reprinted from the Humanitarian review for
October 1907.

Vol. of pam-

phlets.

Restrictions on Use:

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35 mm

REDUCTION RATIO: 11x

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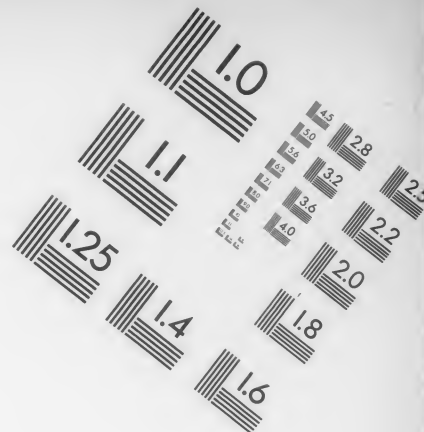
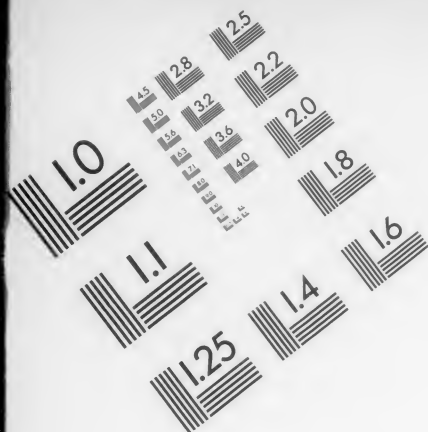


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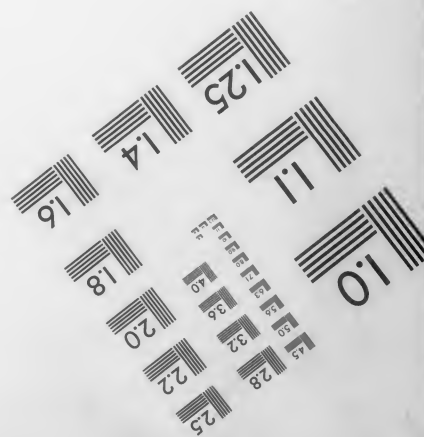
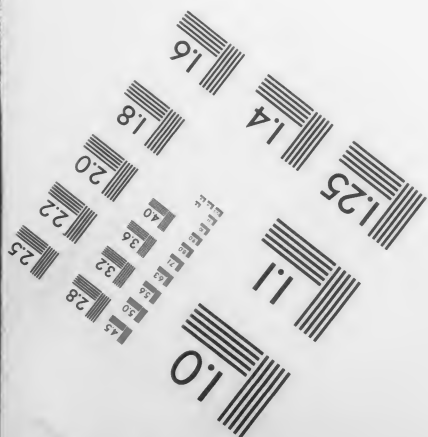
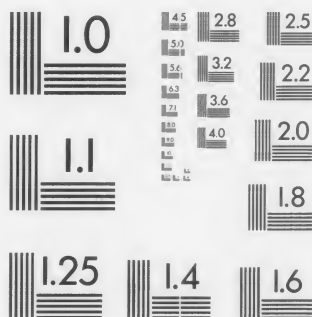
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THOUGHTS ON VIVISECTION

BY

SYDNEY RICHMOND TABER

A REPLY TO PROF. JAMES ROWLAND ANGELL'S PAPER
ENTITLED "THE REFLECTIONS OF A LAYMAN,"
IN "THE WORLD TODAY" FOR
APRIL, 1907

VIVISECTION REFORM SOCIETY

532 MONADNOCK BLOCK-

CHICAGO

1907

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[Reprinted from "THE HUMANITARIAN REVIEW" for October, 1907.]

THOUGHTS ON VIVISECTION.

BY SYDNEY RICHMOND TABER.
Secretary of the Vivisection Reform Society.

THERE is so little tolerance displayed in the controversy to which the subject of scientific experimentation on living animals has given rise that it is refreshing to find a recent writer speaking of "the high-minded and humane instincts which inspire the opponents of vivisection."* This contrasts pleasantly with the frequent attribution of unworthy motives to those who venture to criticise the practice in any way. If in what follows there appears disagreement with some of Prof. Angell's conclusions, this difference of opinion will be expressed without any wish to question the sincerity of a "high-minded defender of the practice," such as he has shown himself to be. An attempt will be made to follow his excellent example in trying "to do full justice to the contentions of those who disagree with him."

Prof. Angell adverts to the argument "that medical and scientific men are entirely disagreed among themselves about the merits of the case, and anti-vivisection literature is full of statements from persons who sign themselves M. D. Over against this," he says, "is to be set the fact that the great associations of physicians and naturalists have expressed themselves repeatedly in the most outspoken way in defense of the necessity for and the humanitarian character of vivisection and animal experimentation." But the difficulty with this answer lies in the fact that, for those who are familiar with the history of this controversy, the testimony of "the great associations of physicians and naturalists" stands discredited. For, in the first place, scientists have repeatedly been convicted of suppressing the truth about vivisectional matters, and have gone to the length of suggesting the false. To take one example out of many that might be cited: Several years ago, the National Academy of Science gave its unanimous assurance to the Congress of the United States that

* "The Reflections of a Layman," by James Rowland Angell, Professor of Physiology in the University of Chicago, in "The World Today," for April, 1907.

"in modern laboratories anæsthetics are always employed, except when the operation involves less suffering to the animal than the administration of the anæsthetic, *as in the case of inoculations*, or in those instances in which the anæsthetic would interfere with the object of the experiment." There is here an explicit assurance that the suffering caused by inoculation is less than that caused by administering anæsthetics. But medical literature is full of evidences that inoculation produces severe and prolonged anguish.

In his presidential address before one of the sections of the British Medical Association, Dr. George Wilson, LL. D., whose professional eminence has gained for him a place on the Royal Commission that is now investigating the subject of vivisection in England, said:

"Whether so-called toxins are injected under the skin, into the peritoneum, into the cranium, under the dura mater, into the pleural cavity, into the veins, eyes, or other organs—and all these methods are ruthlessly practiced—there is long-drawn-out agony. The animal so innocently operated on may have to live days, weeks, or months, with no anæsthetic to assuage its sufferings, and nothing but death to relieve."

Can such suffering be seriously compared with the temporary discomfort involved in administering an anæsthetic? And can it be supposed that the scientists who made the above representation were ignorant of these scientific facts? This instance would seem to furnish an illustration of another passage in the address above referred to:

"I have not allied myself to the Anti-vivisectionists, but I accuse my profession of misleading the public as to the cruelties and horrors which are perpetrated on animal life. When it is stated that the actual pain involved in these experiments is commonly of the most trifling description, there is a suppression of the truth, of the most palpable kind, which could only be accounted for at the time by ignorance of the actual facts."

In the second place, "the great associations of physicians" would be more readily accepted as witnesses in regard to animal experimentation if their attitude had been different from what it has been concerning the vice of human vivisection. The leading medical journals have repeatedly recounted experiments, involv-

ing various degrees of suffering, made upon men and women—generally hospital patients—and even upon children and the insane, not for their benefit or cure, but in the interests of science. How have these disclosures been received by the great associations? By a silence that can mean nothing other than acquiescence. Until they emphatically rebut the presumption thus raised—that these outrages upon human victims are condoned and approved—the public will naturally receive with allowance their outspoken defense of the humanitarian character of experimentation upon animals.

It is to be feared that Prof. Angell has, no doubt unwittingly, given his readers an erroneous impression by the phrase he has chosen in speaking of the physicians who have expressed anti-vivisection views. He refers to them as "persons who sign themselves M. D." One unfamiliar with the facts would be justified in understanding that this class is entirely composed of men who hold alleged degrees of doubtful authority, or fraudulently assume the right to use the title mentioned; in short, that all critics of vivisection are either persons of no consequence or else out-and-out imposters. Now, this is very far from the truth. As a matter of history, it was the medical profession of Great Britain that first denounced the atrocities of such research, and the leading medical journals of England for a score of years reflected the abhorrence felt toward vivisectional excess by the great majority of English medical men. In fact, from the very beginning of the agitation to the present time, among the severest critics of the practice have been some of the most eminent members of the profession on both sides of the Atlantic. The catalogue of these names would be too long for the present purpose, but among such critics mention may be made of Sir Charles Bell, to whom is attributed the greatest physiological discovery of the nineteenth century, who spoke of some of his own experiments as "cruelties" and doubted whether he was "authorized in nature or religion" to do them, adding, "And yet, what are my experiments in comparison with those that are daily done, and are done daily for nothing!"; of Dr. Lawson Tait, one of the most distinguished of English surgeons, who claimed that but for the fallacies of vivisection the art of healing would be today "at least a century in advance of its present position"; of Dr. Bell

Taylor, one of the leading oculists of Great Britain, who stated that "no good ever came from the practice, and no good ever will"; and of many others, some of whom are named elsewhere in this paper.

But perhaps the most interesting portion of Prof. Angell's article is that in which he speaks of the question as to how much suffering is actually caused by vivisectional and experimental methods. By repeated reference to anæsthetics he paves the way for his conclusion that "the pain caused to animals in such work is generally negligible as compared with that which they suffer under the vicissitudes of life in a state of nature." In this statement and in the disbelief expressed that "serious abuses exist in this country," he furnishes an excellent illustration of that disagreement among scientific men themselves to which he had previously adverted.

To the views that Prof. Angell expresses may be opposed a host of medical witnesses who, in speaking of vivisectional experiments, use such expressions as "unqualifiedly cruel," "most abhorrent," "needless and cruel," "horror of vivisection," "inhuman, cruel and brutalizing." Take, for instance, the testimony of Dr. George M. Gould, one of the leading medical writers of America, the founder and for many years editor of *American Medicine*. Commenting on the confession of a foreign vivisectioner that he had "no regard at all" for the sufferings of the animals that he used, Dr. Gould says, "I am certain a few American experimenters feel the same way and act in accordance with their feelings. They must not only be silenced, but their useless and unscientific work should be stopped. They are a disgrace both to science and humanity." This statement of an unquestionable authority deals a blow to the comfortable assurance naturally cherished by Americans that, whatever cruelties may be practiced abroad, serious abuses do not exist in this country. And in line with this is the statement of Prof. Theophilus Parvin, M. D., LL. D., for many years one of the professors at Jefferson Medical College. After speaking of certain vivisectioners who "seem blind to the writhing agony and deaf to the cry of pain of their victims, and who have been guilty of the most damnable cruelties," he adds, "These criminals are not confined to Germany or France. England or Italy, but may be found in our own country."

It is difficult to understand what is meant by Professor Angell's comparison of the pain inflicted upon animals in laboratories and that which they suffer in a state of nature, seeing that animals used for vivisection are for the most part domestic and not wild. Cats, dogs, guinea pigs, rabbits, pigeons, etc., undoubtedly suffer, outside of laboratories, hardships and pain in varying degrees. They are liable to hunger, cold, disease and, it may be, to accidents and wounds. But can even the worst of such possibilities be seriously compared to a scientific "torture more terrible by its refinement and the effort to prolong it than burning at the stake"?

That such torture is prevalent, we are assured by the late Dr. Henry J. Bigelow, Professor of Surgery in Harvard Medical School and for many years the leading surgeon of New England. He further says, "Vivisection is not an innocent study It can be indiscriminately used only by torturing the animals; and the word 'torture' is here intentionally used to convey the idea of very severe pain—sometimes the severest conceivable pain of infinite duration, often terminating, fortunately for the animal, with its life, but as often only after hours or days of refined infliction, continuously or at intervals. A man about to be burned under a railroad car begs somebody to kill him. The Hindoo suttee has been abolished for its inhumanity; and yet it is a statement to be taken literally, that a brief death by burning would be considered a happy release by a human being undergoing the experience of some of the animals who slowly die in a laboratory."

After dwelling upon these points of disagreement with Prof. Angell, it is a pleasure to register a hearty accord with him in his plea for "education and enlightenment of public opinion" and for "publicity." But public opinion can never be educated by the equivocation and misinformation that have been too often sanctioned by the great associations and by individual scientists. What the public needs for enlightenment is the exact truth about vivisection—the whole truth and nothing but the truth. As for publicity, there surely cannot be any good reason why everything that concerns a scientific method or purpose should not be plainly and accurately set forth. Yet, except when some physiologist in a moment of candor reveals the secrets of the laboratory, or, appalled at the hideous cruelty that he has seen, voices his

protest, the public is kept in ignorance of what goes on in the halls of science. There is no proposition that vivisectors have so strenuously combated as the suggestion that they make a public report of the number and nature of their experiments. So when Prof. Angell contends that "publicity is a far more efficient remedy than legislation," the answer is that publicity is impossible without legislation. How can we secure that publicity which is to prevent abuse? How can we know what animals and how many are daily sacrificed in laboratories on the altar of science, the purpose for which the experiment was made and the result attained? Not one laboratory in America affords this information. What, then, is needed is the enactment of a law, not to prohibit or abolish, but one that shall bring out all the facts pertaining to a practice which, to quote Dr. Bigelow of Harvard Medical School, "immeasurably beyond any other pursuit, involves the infliction of torture to little or no purpose. Restrictions," he says, "will and should cut off the horde of dull torturers who follow in the wake of the discoverer. The law should interfere. There can be no doubt that in this relation there exists a case of cruelty to animals far transcending in its refinement and in its horrors anything that has been known in the history of nations. There will come a time when the world will look back to modern vivisection in the name of science as it now does to burning at the stake in the name of religion."

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